

Lamia

by Dore

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Lamia

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Description: crossover _Charmed_/_Poltergeist_.

Disclaimer: none of them belong to me: Prue, Piper and Phoebe are borrowed from _Charmed_, Nick, Derek and Alex from _Poltergeist: The Legacy_, Van Helsing from Bram Stoker's _Dracula_, and so on and so forth. Actually, I only created the Witherspoon and the Wollenstone families. All mythological references are accurate " as far as my researches were right.

Warning: English is not my mother-tongue, so please indulge any linguistic mistake you may find. Plus this is my first fan fiction ever, so

This is for my Beta-Reader, Alexa, who was sweet enough to read me " and to force me not to avoid all the difficulties I was trying to get rid of. Thanks, Alex!

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Lamia

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"Happy Birthday!"

As she opened the door, Phoebe Halliwell was welcomed by the sight of

her sisters, Prue and Piper, standing under a "Happy Birthday" banner, right before having her skull crushed in a bear-like hug.

"Hey, look at her! She thought we would never remember!" said Piper with a wink.

"Especially because my birthday was seven months ago," Phoebe answered, wondering what was wrong with them. Maybe an alien had taken control of their bodies. Or fighting warlocks had finally altered their brains. Yeah, it must be that.

"Okay, we're late for your birthday, or early for Christmas, whatever, but we really wanted to give you this," Prue explained as she handed her sister a present wrapped in a Winnie Pooh paper. "I love you, sis!" she added.

"Oh, look at that! I love Winnie Pooh!"

"Will you just open it! We've been waiting forever and I really want to eat the cake, and where have you been all day anyway? Oh never mind, open it first, come on!"

"Easy, Piper, I'm working on it."

In order to tease her sister, Phoebe unwrapped the present as slowly as possible, watching Piper rolling her eyes, while Prue was smiling happily.

"I just don't want to ruin the paper!"

"Yeah, right."

Inside the box was a doll, protected by tissue papers. Her porcelain head had been painted in a most exquisite way, and her chestnut hair were held by a blue velvet ribbon which matched her dress. Phoebe was unable to pronounce an articulate word and just sat still, her mouth slightly open in amazement.

"Phoebe Halliwell dumbfounded, I never thought I would live to see that!" Piper laughed.

"Thanks, guys, I love it," she finally said with a huge grin on her face.

"We thought you were old enough to have your own doll," Prue explained in a mother-like tone, before hugging her sister tenderly. "Now take it! You won't break it!"

When she touched the doll, Phoebe had the vision of a sleeping child holding the doll tight in her arms. As she opened her eyes, her sisters were looking at her with a worried look, but were relieved when she told them what she had seen. Then, Piper ran in the kitchen and came back with a birthday cake, a lit candle on it.

"Make a wish!"

"It's not even my birthday!"

"You have a cake and a candle, don't you? Just make a wish!" Prue

ordered in a commanding voice.

With a little bow, Phoebe did as she was told, closing her eyes as she made a wish. The rest of the evening was spent chatting and watching television. That night, Phoebe dreamt of a doll with no eyeballs licking her blood stained fingers, but when the young witch woke up, pouring with sweat, she was unable to remember what she had seen.

At the San Francisco Legacy House, Derek has a similar dream. He was taken away from it when he felt a presence in his room. One would call it 'job conditioning,' but he awoke instantly, only to see Christina standing by his bed. Before he could say a word, she told him: "Beware of the Lamies," and was gone. The Dutchman had learned from experience that he could trust Christina as an informer, and he immediately got up to start researching on the Lamies.

Nick and Alex found him in the library the next morning. He quickly explained what had happened during the night and what he had found.

"In the Greek mythology, the Lamies were female demons who killed the children. They were named after Lamia, whom Zeus was in love with. Hera, who was jealous, killed all of Lamia's children. Zeus gave her the power to remove her eyeballs and put them back in their sockets as she wished: she was able to sleep only when she took them off or when she was under the influence of drink. Since then Lamia wanders the world, killing children in order to avenge her own children's death."

Nick was about to say that those Lamies were basically bogey women, but thought better of it. Derek was really competent in his field, but he seemed allergic to any kind of popularization of his knowledge â€" an lupan was not a werewolf, even if after killing one the young man could still not see the difference between the two. If his boss used the word Lamies instead of bogey man or ogre, he would go with it. Without any comment, he settled before the computer to start his research on the subject.

While she was getting dressed, Phoebe stopped and stretched her hand to touch the doll's immobile face, brushing against the velvet dress and had another vision. The child she had seen the day before was lying on her bed, with flowers, candles and mourners around her. She was dead. On the dressing table sat the doll. Phoebe quickly put on her shoes and left to meet Prue for lunch, telling the doll as she went by her that her sister would probably blow a fuse if she was late, and that one should always avoid making a witch mad if he/she wanted to live long enough to see _Star Wars: Episode Two_.

"Prue, where did you find the doll?" Phoebe finally asked at the end of their lunch.

"In an antique store downtown, why? Is there a problem? Did you see anything?" her sister quickly asked with a worried look.

"Well, I'm not sure butâ€¦| a child who owned it died, I saw

it."

"Are you sure it was set in the past?"

"She was dressed like one of the Little Women."

"I take it as a "yes" then."

"And the doll was there."

"Do you know who the girl was?"

"Not yet, but I will."

They were back at Prue's office, and she had to leave.

"Call me as soon as you find anything, okay?"

"Sure, I will."

Phoebe thought how this was so like Prue: always wanting to know, a real control freak who should sometimes get off the "big-sister" mode. Putting her thoughts considering her older sister aside, she drove to the address Prue had given her.

"Good afternoon, sir. My sisters bought a doll here yesterday, and I would like to know more on its origins."

"It was not stolen, if that's what you mean," the haughty dealer snapped back.

"No, sir, I could just like to meet the persons who owned it before."

"May I ask you why?"

Phoebe just kept smiling and counted to ten in order to calm herself down. This man was really getting on her nerves. She decided to lie.

"Sir, the doll's stuffing came out and I found a necklace in it. I thought its owner might want it back."

"Well, well! And I thought you youngsters did not care for others! This is very thoughtful of you, very thoughtful. You have all my esteem, young lady! Let me seeâ€¦ here: it was a Mrs. Witherspoon. Here is her address. And be polite with her, she's an old lady, you know."

After thanking him, Phoebe left. She felt so irritated by the antique dealer's attitude that she decided to postpone her visit to the "old lady," and to go home report to her sisters.

"Lamia was mentioned by one Legacy member, John Hale, at the end of the seventeenth century, in Salem," Alex explained.

"The witches trials?" Nick asked.

"Exactly. He suspected that the death of Ann Putnam's seven children was in fact due to a demon trapped into a toy."

"And not to witches, as was suspected?"

"Well, actually, in an indirect way, it was."

Both men turned toward her, inviting her to go on.

"There has always been witches fighting demons. Melinda Warren was the one who managed to trap Lamia in a ragged doll. Unfortunately, she was killed by villagers â€" condemned for witchcraft â€" before she could definitely get rid of it with the appropriate formula. Thomas Putnam took the toy and gave it to his daughter. It stayed in the family, and their seven children all died in their infancy. When he found out what had happened, John Hale managed to get hold of the doll, imprisoned it in a sealed box and shipped it to the London House. But what was delivered was a regular doll: Lamia had escaped during the journey to England â€" on the vessel, several children died. It was imputed to poor health condition. I did not find anything else so far."

"I did," Derek said. "In the journal of Van Helsing, at the end of the nineteenth century. He was investigating on several abnormal death among healthy children and discovered that the demon had managed to settle in another doll, which he managed to trap with the help of another witch, Sarah Wollenstone, but if Christina's right, they were not more successful than Hale had been."

And they all knew that the woman was always right, didn't they?

"Sarah Wollenstone was a descendant of Melinda Warren. She had settled in England after her marriage to Thomas Wollenstone. They had four children: Michael, Paul, Marie and Abigail. Within a year, the two boys died, killed by a Lamie, according to Van Helsing â€" Thomas Wollenstone had met him while he was in Cambridge, and asked for his help. The two men and Sarah Wollenstone worked together to save the life of Marie, whose health was deteriorating, but failed. Thomas Wollenstone got killed while trying to protect his daughter. His widow and Van Helsing managed to trap the Lamie and to save Abigail from it. Sarah Wollenstone took her daughter back to the United States and settled in San Francisco. Her descendants still live there."

"So, what do we do? Knock on their door, and explain that twice in the past the Legacy and their ancestors fought together against a Lamie, and that they should take our word on it?" Nick asked.

"Why not? According to what we know about their family, they're probably good witches, and will therefore help us."

"What if they are not witches?"

"Then they'll think we're crazy," said a pragmatic Alex.

Try to answer that.

Phoebe had another dream that night. The child was sleeping, her doll held tight in her arms. A woman was stroking the girl's hair, smiling tenderly. She lifted her head and smiled to the young witch. The doll turned her porcelain head. Her eye sockets were empty and blood was dripping from her chin. It came from a deep wound in the girl's neck. The doll grinned at the young witch and buried her head back in the flesh.

In the morning, she did not remember her dream, but felt as if she had had no sleep. They had decided the night before that Piper and Phoebe would visit Mrs. Witherspoon "for a change, Prue had too much work at Buckland to accompany them. As they were stepping outside the house, three persons came to them, introduced themselves and asked if they could talk together of a business concerning their family. Piper and Phoebe accepted to postpone their visit, feeling that those persons were trustworthy since their cat had instantly rubbed herself against Nick's leg, and purred.

"To come straight to the point, we found out that several women on your family tree were witches. Two of them helped our organization against a demon, we now think that it is back, and we are asking you to help us."

Phoebe smiled at the direct explanation Nick gave them, while Piper dialed Prue's number. She had told them not to call her today unless it was an emergency, and Piper definitely considered what had been told as an urgent matter. She gave her sister a brief summary of the situation and then put on the speaker phone so that Prue could follow the conversation, and invited their visitors to go on. Derek explained to them who the Lamies were, and the two previous battle led to get rid of Lamia.

"If Melinda and Sarah Wollenstone used a formula against it, it must be in the Book of Shadows. But we know it did not work," Prue's voice said.

"Maybe Melinda had time to write down how she intended to destroy it definitely," Phoebe suggested.

"I don't think so, otherwise Sarah would have used it," Piper said. "Pheeb, why don't you show them the doll?"

When she came back with it, explaining the visions she had while touching it, Derek recognized the doll he had seen in his dream.

"We were about to pay a visit to the woman who owned it previously, would you like to join us?" Piper offered.

"I have to go back and see what I can find on the mean to destroy it. Nick, Alex, why don't you go with them?"

"Piper, Pheeb, please be careful. And call me as soon as possible."

"Sure. Bye, Charlie!"

And off they went.

"So, what do you think of them?" Phoebe asked her sister while they were driving to Mrs. Witherspoon's home " Nick and Alex had taken their own car.

"Well, the cat likes them, so I guess we can trust them."

"Don't you think trusting a cat is kind of uncertain?"

"Call it feminine intuition, then."

Coming from someone who had fallen in love with a demon, a ghost and a Whitelighter in less than a year, Phoebe found it amusing but did not say anything. She agreed with her sister though and had a good feeling about the three Legacy members.

In the other car, Alex asked Nick the same question.

"They seem alright. But of course, don't base your thesis on the opinion of someone who managed to fall for a succubus."

The woman only smiled at the comment before adding:

"Does it mean you're not going to fall for a witch?"

"After Julia and Karen, I guess I'll have to use the let's-just-be-friends card."

When she saw the doll, which Phoebe had brought, Mrs. Witherspoon's eyes were filled with memories. How Eva had been overjoyed when she had received it for her tenth birthday, ignoring it would be her last.

"I had been living with the memories of my late daughter for thirty years. Following my son's advice, I've decided to move on and got rid of her favorite doll. She always slept with it."

After taking their leave of the old lady, they decided that Nick and Alex would take the doll back to Angel Island in order to run some analysis on it, while Phoebe would search the Book of Shadows and Piper would go to work.

When Nick called to see whether Phoebe had found anything, she replied by negative.

"I did not learn anything from the analysis either. Just a doll."

"Shouldn't we talk to Mrs. Witherspoon's son? He was a kid when his sister died, maybe he saw something and that's why he insisted on getting rid of the doll."

That was pretty much what he had said about the bottle the shaman had given Alex, which almost led to her death, therefore he knew that not finding anything did not mean there was nothing in it.

"Why don't we go now? I'll pick you up."

"Meanwhile, I'll call Mrs. Witherspoon to ask for his address."

Once settled in the car, on their way to where Charles Witherspoon lived, they resumed their conversation.

"According to what she explained to me on the phone, she had a nervous breakdown after Eva's death, and Charles was raised by his grandparents in Utah."

"Which is why the Lamie did not kill him. What about his father?"

"He left when Charles was a baby."

Phoebe gave a little laugh and added:

"My father did pretty much the same."

"Mine was not especially a nice fellow either. Did you ever see your father?"

"Once. On our first meeting he called me Piper," she explained in a bitter voice. Ouch, still hurts. "And he left. It was safer that way, I guess. What about yours? Do you keep in touch?"

"He died when I was fifteen."

Phoebe was speechless for a moment, not knowing whether she should say she was sorry or ask for more information — she was of a curious nature. She broke the silence, asking him to stop at a nearby drive-thru to pick up a drink. When Nick handed her what she had ordered, she had a vision: she saw him, as a child, trying to protect himself from his father's blows. When she opened her eyes again, she saw in his gaze that the young man understood what she had seen.

"I'm sorry, I don't control it — I didn't mean to invade your private life."

"It's okay, don't apologize."

They were silent for a few minutes, before she finally asked:

"Do you want to talk about it?"

"Some day, but not right now, if you don't mind. I would rather be in a good mood for this visit."

"Of course. What do you want to talk about?"

Nick laughed. When he had said they would talk about it someday, he had meant it. Strange how he was at ease with her. The conversation settled on base-ball, much to his delight.

"How come you know so much about it but don't like it?" Nick asked.

"When I was in New York, I wanted to date a guy who was a base-ball fan, therefore I learned as much as possible, hoping to attract his attention that way. That was before I found out he was gay!"

"What did you do?"

"I set him up on a date with a friend of mine and they've been together ever since."

They both laughed at the anecdote, and the rest of the journey was spent chatting on various subject, including who deserved to play the part of Anakin Skywalker in Star Wars: Episode Two.

"What does he do, again?" Nick asked.

"He's an English teacher in high-school. When I talked to him over the phone, he said he'd be there."

They had found the house quite easily, but nobody answered the door bell. Nick was about to say he would go around the house, just in case " 'when fighting demons, you should always assume someone is in trouble, even if it makes you look like an idiot' should be written on a How to Become an Efficient Ghostbuster self-help book. Maybe he would submit this project to Phoebe some day, guessing that between the two of them they should come up with an almost exhaustive list of advice.

"May I help you?"

They both turned around to face a man in his late thirties.

"Mr. Witherspoon? I'm Phoebe Halliwell, and this is Nick Boyle, we came to"

"Sure, sure, I remember," Charles interrupted. "Just call me Charles," he added while taking his keys out. "I'm sorry I'm late but I drove my son to a slumber party and had to come back because I had forgotten to pack his blanket " he can't sleep without it. I know his middle name is Linus, but the reference to The Peanuts is getting too literal. Would you please come in?"

Nick and Phoebe felt at ease with the talkative man right away. A father who took care of his kid? Wow, two thumbs up.

"At least this time I did not forget his toothbrush. But you did not come to talk about my son's habits, did you? You said you wanted to learn more on my sister's death?"

"We know it's been a long time, but we were hoping you could remember whether something strange happened," Nick started.

"You mean like Betty-the-doll? Don't look surprised," Charles laughed, "my mother called to tell me about your visit. Eva, my sister, had always had dreams when she slept. Every morning she would tell me about it, never hiding anything, even her nightmares. Sometimes we would even compare our dreams, which were occasionally similar. For me, it was like a bedtime story, it was a ritual. That's why I remember exactly when it stopped. After she got that doll,

there never was a morning story anymore. Never again."

Charles stopped, took a sip from his beer before resuming his narrative.

"While Eva stopped having dreams, my nightmares began. I saw an eyeless Betty sipping blood out of her. The setting would change, but the vampire doll was recurrent. Sometimes, a woman would be there too."

"One of my colleagues had a similar dream," Nick interrupted. "Would you tell us more about it, if you can remember?"

"Remember? Yes, oh yes, I do remember. Every time my son goes to sleep, I pray for him to have a safe slumber. Once, the night before my sister died, Lamia talked to me. She said that I should not be afraid, that really soon I would not dream anymore. Then she told me to watch as Betty was drinking my sister's blood, biting her flesh off as she did."

He stopped once more as a sudden shiver ran through him.

"I knew I would be next, therefore I asked my mother to send me away to my grandparents. I tried to tell her about Lamia, how she was responsible for Eva's death, but I was six years old and she did not listen to me. Even if she had, she would not have been able to do anything about it, would she? That's all I can say now."

"We understand."

"Thank you, Charles, you've been very helpful," Phoebe said.

"If anything comes up, call any one of us," Nick added.

"I will."

While shaking his hand goodbye, Phoebe had a vision of Charles, his wife and his son, all of them happy, surrounding a newborn baby.

"Congratulations, Charles," she said before leaving.

As soon as they were out of the house, they agreed that they should all meet to talk about it, and that Angel Island was the appropriate place to do it. Piper complained a little but said she would be there as soon as possible, while Prue was mad because she had not been a part of the visit but agreed on coming.

"Is your sister okay?" Nick asked with concern when Phoebe told him about Prue's reaction.

"Yeah, but she always need to control everything."

"Sounds pretty much like Derek."

"One should not take history as a major. Aggravates the sense of responsibility. If we take a decision about a demon or a warlock, even if she would have taken the same had she been there, she gets

mad because we took a risk without her being there to protect us."

"Derek also has some trouble to delegate. How about Piper?"

"She is of a nervous kind. Full of stress. You can say by the way she touches her forehead while taking a deep breath."

"I'll keep that in mind."

"Sometimes I feel a little outcast, being the only one with a passive power. But I'm studying martial arts, in order to be more efficient."

"I understand the outcast feeling, sometimes I feel like an army man lost among researchers. What did you think of Charles Witherspoon?"

"He seems pretty nice. Helpful. I thought that when one grew up with a lousy father he or she became a lousy parent. I guess I was proved wrong."

"Or he's an exception to the rule. Or he hides his real self. What did you see when you shook his hand?"

"They're going to have a baby."

"According to what Van Helsing wrote," Derek explained once the six of them were settled in the library, "Lamia does not need to kill often in order to survive. She wants her victim to die slowly, in order for the parents to suffer."

"Which is why she can stay for a while without killing anyone, for example when she was at Mrs. Witherspoon's," Prue continued.

Phoebe and Nick exchanged a knowing look. The two historians were taking care of summing up what they had found so far. How surprising.

"The only victims which the Legacy managed to study were Sarah Wollenstone's children, and nothing was found to explain their death. And according to Eva Witherspoon's file, she died of natural causes."

"It seems that Lamia sucks the child's life when he or she sleeps andâ€¦ Piper, will you stop pacing, you're making me nervous."

"Well, I'm sorry, but we gave our own sister a killing doll. Stress justified."

She touched her forehead before putting her hands on her hips. Phoebe got up and gave her a quick hug.

"Hey, don't worry, I'm too old to get killed by a doll named Betty. Lamia only attacks children, and won't like my meat."

"Well, actually she may not eat you but she can still kill anyone who

gets in her way," Alex interrupted. "That's what happened to Thomas Wollenstone."

"Thanks. Making me feel better," Piper said before going on with her pacing. "So what do we do? We have no efficient formula, no would be victim to protect, and no way to know if she is still in that particular doll â€" the vision you had, Phoebe, was connected to Betty, not to Lamia."

They all agreed on the fact that they could not do anything for the moment and parted until the next morning. As Scarlet O'Hara said, "Tomorrow will be another day." But then again, what did she know? She had never met Tempus, had she?

"Guys!" Phoebe stormed in the kitchen, making Prue jump. Her coffee should have spilled on the floor â€" thank God for little favors like freezing time and sending the liquid into the sink. These scenes were so common in this house that none of them paid any attention to it. "I had a vision while I was touching Betty."

"You touched it on purpose, didn't you?" Prue asked, suspicious.

"Of course! I want to find out as much as possible. Anyway, I saw Mrs. Witherspoon sleeping with the doll. I think we should check on her, find something. I don't have visions unless it's important, you know."

"You should call Nick, Alex and Derek and see what they can find on her," Piper suggested.

"I just did. Nick's working on it, he'll call as soon as they find something."

"So what do we do?" Prue asked.

"You both have to go to work, so I'll be on my own. It will depend on what Nick and Alex finds out â€" Derek had to leave for a conference in New York, Nick told me."

"But don't forgetâ€"|" Prue started.

"â€"I'll call you to let you know," Phoebe finished.

"Call both of us. I'm not boss-like, but I still worry," Piper added. "Oh, I almost forgot! We received a postcard from Alexa. She and Adam got married in Greece."

Phoebe drove to the Legacy's house. Nick had some results to show her, he said on the phone. It was nice to get some outside help, to know they were not the only ones fighting demons. Plus she really appreciated the young man's company â€" even if being friend with a cute guy without flirting was something new for her. She felt close to him, even if they had only met twenty-four hours ago. He was the brother she never had.

Waiting for her, Nick was sharing similar thoughts. His relationship

to his brother never was a good was before his death " even more disastrous after " and it felt good to be around siblings as united as the three witches were. He did not feel as if he had had a family in his youth, and now his elected family extended again. Would wonder never cease? He glanced at Julia's picture and thought "thanks for helping me to open up" | thanks for loving me" | " before heading downstairs.

Alex and him summed up what they had found on Mrs. Witherspoon.

"She's been travelling a lot since her daughter died," Alex started.

"Because of your suspicion we checked and it turns out that a child died for unknown reasons in every town she visited. A police report mentions how a child whose brother had died mysteriously said he had seen, I quote, "a weird lady ogre with a doll," unquote, in a park doing something to his brother's teddy bear before he got sick. This was eighteen years ago. Wallace Pankhurst still lives in Palo Alto. We made arrangements to meet him, wanna come?"

"Do I?"

An hour later, a red car with two witches as passengers was on its way to Palo Alto " Piper had managed to get out of her work.

"So, what's your theory?" she asked.

"Well, Lamia managed to switch her container previously, so my guess is that she would use Betty as a vehicle, settle in another toy for a while, and then go back to Betty," Phoebe explained.

"What I can't figure out," Nick said, "is the part Mrs. Witherspoon played in that. Was it a coincidence?"

"You said," Piper suggested, "that Lamia had talked to Charles in his dreams, maybe she did the same with his mother and convinced her to do it, which was especially easy since she slept with the doll, as Phoebe saw. She mentioned that she had had a nervous breakdown, she was probably feeling guilty and Lamia used it. But in that case, why did she sell the doll?"

"I have _no_ idea," Nick answered.

"Hey, pump up the volume of the radio, I love that song!" Phoebe exclaimed all of a sudden as Barry White's _My First, My Last, My Everything_ started.

"You'd better do it, Nick, otherwise you'll meet an angry Phoebe " not fun company," Piper advised, already dancing on her seat.

Since he had passengers, he respected the speed limits and was almost surprised that they had reached Palo Alto so quickly " the two sisters had entertained him during the journey, making him laugh with their stories and good mood. After the song was over, they had explained to him that it was a recurrent song in a TV show and that

the little dance they had performed was a ritual " even if because of the said ritual they had almost landed on a tree. Despite what Phoebe affirmed, he doubted that the highway code said that in that particular case the tree was at fault. The conversation soon landed on television, and as they reached Wallace Pankhurst's apartment building they were reciting Jerry Seinfeld's stand up parts.

"_I wanted to do unbelievable at the hearing test. I wanted them to come to me after the hearing test and say: "We think you may have something close to super hearing. What you heard was a cotton ball touching a piece of felt. We're sending the results to Washington. We'd like you to meet the president._"

"Okay, stop it Piper, we've arrived," Phoebe interrupted.

Wallace Pankhurst, a young man in his mid-twenties, invited them to come in and told them what he had seen.

"Bobby and I were playing in the park, under our mother's surveillance. He had left his teddy bear with her, because he didn't want to ruin it while climbing trees. The lady sat on the same bench as my mother, settled her doll by the bear's side and started to chat with Mum. I remember Bobby telling me that she must have been a cuckoo, walking around with a doll in her arms like a child, and that it was okay for him to play with a teddy bear because he was a kid, but not for a grown-up. He ran toward his toy, saying he didn't want the ogre lady to come into it. That's it."

"And did you have any dreams?" Piper asked.

"No, I'm afraid not."

"Do you happen to still have some of your brother's belongings?" Phoebe asked.

He left for a few minutes and held a teddy bear out to Phoebe. And she saw. She saw a terrified child being torn limb by limb by his stuffed teddy bear. She heard him begging. She heard him crying in pain. She smelled blood. She saw Lamia stroking Bobby's hair as he was dying. She saw how night after night she would take a piece of him away. She saw Bobby telling his parents he was scared of sleeping, the parents laughed, told him not to let the bedbugs bite, kissed him goodnight. She saw Wallace trying to put his brother's mind at ease by taking him in his own bed. She saw Bobby's struggles to stay awake. She felt his fear with all of her body, with all of her soul. Piper, seeing that her sister was in pain, took the stuffed bear away from her, which brought Phoebe back to reality.

"Are you psychic?" Wallace asked, handing her a glass of water.

She nodded.

"Bobby was too. He saw stuff."

"That's probably why it was so intense. Do you happen to be psychic too, Wallace?" Nick asked.

"Nope. I guess I would have been able to help Bobby if I had."

Phoebe fell asleep during the journey back home.

"I hate it when this happen," Piper raged. "It makes me feel soâ€¦ I can't even help her! Look how pale she isâ€¦"

"Is it always like that?"

"Thank God, no. Usually, it lasts for less than a second. She never had a blackout like that before. She's been tired lately, and the dead kid was psychic, that's why it was so intense, as you said."

"Eva had a lot of dreams. We should check with Charles whether they were premonitions or something."

Piper swallowed slowly before expressing the idea they shared.

"She's next, isn't she?â€¦ But she's too old!â€¦ Unless it is Lamia's revenge on our familyâ€¦ Why do I have the feeling that the power of the three will not help us on that one?"

Nick did not know what to say to reassure her. How to promise her he would not let her sister be hurt when he had not been able to protect the woman he loved? They both fell silent, lost in their thoughts until they reached the Halliwell's house.

A funeral. A child's funeral. A woman who did not cry as the coffin disappeared in the grave. A woman who had cried so much that she did not have any tears left. Because of the rain they had had in the last few days, the wooden box gave a damp sound when it hit the ground. Back home. The nurse put the children to bed. Their remaining children. Two dead. Two alive. Why had she been unable to protect her sons? Would she lose her daughters too? Thomas did not seem to blame it on her. On the contrary, he was willing to act. Telling her about a Mr. Van Helsing who was passionately interested in anything supernatural. He would help them. How could she deny it was supernatural? She had refused to call Van Helsing so far, hiding the truth from herself. Letting her children die. She had put an ocean between herself and anything supernatural. Wanted to start a new life with Thomas. She had blocked her children's powers in order for them to be "normal." She had forgotten her family heritage. Was she to blame? Thomas shook his head, embraced her and murmured reassuring words to her hear. He would call Van Helsing. Together they would neutralize whatever was killing their children. He reminded her of his words when he had learned she was a witch. That he did not understand but that he accepted. For better and for worth.

Phoebe was aware this was not reality. Not her reality. She was seeing what had happened a century ago. Awwâ€¦ She felt so strange. Voices muffled. Van Helsing was there now. Marie was dying slowly. Why couldn't they see that the doll was eating her alive? Why didn't they take the toy away from her? She tried to tell them but they could not hear her. Abigail was but an infant, too young to be able to tell her parents about the dreams which woke her up night after night. They found a formula in the Book of Shadows. The formula

Melinda Warren had used. Lamia used to wander freely on earth. Now she was doomed to be trapped in an object, whatever it was. But she could not stay away from the original object for too long or she was drawn back to it. But she had learned how to manipulate. In order to eat her fill.

The woman talked to Phoebe directly. Introduced herself as Christina. Told her the Lamie could be linked to another object with an appropriate ritual. What if the object was destroyed? Christina slowly shook her head. This would set her free for good. What was the solution then? Watch and learn. Van Helsing had conducted some research. Lamia's aborted ritual. Formula should be in the Book of Shadows. Took the doll away from Marie. Too late. Child dead. Lit candles. Flowers. Doll on dressing table. Sarah insisted on it. Something grabbed Thomas's throat. Furious that a mere mortal had attempted to defeat her. His skull cracked. Killed him too. Husband dead. Van Helsing shaking Sarah. Telling her to take her responsibilities. Not to run away from what she was. To save Abigail. Managed to immobilize Lamia with cloves of garlic. Was a vampire in a way, wasn't she? Lamia backed off and disappeared. Van Helsing left. Thought he had won. Had another mission to accomplish in London.

The surrounding slowly faded as Phoebe became aware of voices calling her name. She opened her eyes slowly. She was home, her head resting on Piper's lap, her sister stroking her hair. Prue and Nick stood nearby, glancing worried looks at her.

"Hey, Sleeping Beauty," Piper said quietly. "Is that all you found to get you Prince? Sorry, it failed. you're stuck with us."

"What happened?" Phoebe asked in a hushed voice, attempting more or less successfully to seat up.

"You fell asleep after our meeting with Wallace Pankhurst. We let you sleep in the car and Nick carried you inside since we could not wake you up."

"You looked like you were having a dream," Nick said in a soft voice.

"I. I saw what happened to Sarah Wollenstone's children. She had tried to escape the fight against the demons by moving away, that's why she did not do anything to save her sons. She was scared. But her husband took care of it and called Van Helsing. Thomas and Marie died. Christina told me that Lamia could be trapped into another object with a ritual."

"Then. who transferred it from the first doll to Betty?" Prue asked.

Phoebe answered with a yawn. As far as she was concerned, she would consider the problem after a decent sleep. "not that your back seat is not comfortable, Nick, but I need my bed. She bid them good night and left. She dreamt again but could not remember it."

"According to what I know on the Putnam family," Prue said, "they were vindictive people. Maybe they learned who Lamia was and decided

that other parents should suffer as much as they had."

"Valid explanation, I admit it," Piper said. "But you said Betty was a Victorian doll, and Phoebe recognized it in her vision. Who transferred it from the Colonial doll to the Victorian one?"

"Maybe someone who wanted to hurt your family," Nick proposed. "They seemed pretty wealthy, and the children would not have played with an old toy. Plus, when you fight demons, warlocks and other weirdo, you are doomed to have enemies."

"We should look in the Book of Shadow and make a list of the persons who might want to kill us, is that what you suggest?" Piper asked.

"Pretty much," the young man answered. "But Phoebe's right, it's been a long day. See you tomorrow."

The occasion for them to meet again came the following day, when Charles Witherspoon asked them all to come to visit his mother, who was in the hospital because she had had a mental breakdown and kept mumbling something about an ogre who took her baby away. Except for Alex, whose help Derek had required in New York, and Prue, who had to work, they all went â€" well, the three of them visited the old woman. Charles greeted them.

"I'm sorry I called you on such short notice, but I received a phone call from her in the middle of the night, where she told me that Lamia had forced her to do it, then she began to cry and could not say anything coherent. I thought she might be willing to talk to you."

Nick really wished Rachel was here â€" where is a shrink when you need one? Actually, she wanted to spend some time with her daughter, he could not blame it on her. But still, her advice on how to deal with Mrs. Witherspoon would have been welcomed. He decided to let the sisters handle the conversation, hoping their being women would put the old lady at ease. Piper tried to get her to talk but the only answer she received were tears and a string of apologies.

"What are you sorry for?" Piper asked softly.

Mrs. Witherspoon's broken sentences came in a flow:

"She saidâ€¦ she said I had toâ€¦ I'm so sorryâ€¦ I didn't mean toâ€¦ to hurt anyoneâ€¦ She said she would kill my Charlie ifâ€¦ if I didn't feed herâ€¦ oh my godâ€¦ I helped her kill all those children!â€¦ She said I had to get rid of the dollâ€¦ that she wanted to get her revenge on Melindaâ€¦ to kill her daughtersâ€¦ she said she would kill my Charlieâ€¦ she said I would see Eva againâ€¦"

The sobs finally broke when the doctor, alarmed by her patient's mental health, gave her a sedative and asked the visitors to leave the room.

As they were walking back to Nick's car, Phoebe suddenly collapsed.

The medics arrived immediately and took her back inside the hospital. The doctor diagnosed a sudden drop of her blood pressure, and explained to Nick and Piper that yes, it was normal for her to sleep so much, that she would probably wake up and leave the hospital within a few hours. When he asked them to go home and wait for his call, Piper took her more resolute don't-you-dare-trying-to-make-me-move-away expression and sat down on a chair in the room, near her sister. Nick understood her state of mind and politely told Dr. Fields they would rather stay, then left to call Prue.

"Prue Halliwell."

"Hi, this is Nick. Phoebe's in the hospital, her blood pressure dropped, she's not in danger, she's asleep right now."

"I'll be right there."

He smiled. He had only met Prue a couple of times but he was beginning to figure her out "as quickly as he had with her sisters actually. She was clearly a workaholic who would not delay her assignment even if she was sick as a dog, but who would drop everything if the situation was critical" and this had probably started way before the witchcraft came in her life.

Then he called Derek to let him know how things were going. Not that his boss had asked him to, but because he knew the Dutchman would probably have thought about the case and would have come up with an idea. Several different people who worked together, adding their own talents to others', this was the strength of the Legacy. Derek had many faults (or qualities, depending on how you chose to consider it), and one of them was to never stop thinking of his work, a work which monopolized him twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. As Nick had expected, Derek had made some researches.

"Alex and I went to talk to Irving Biberman, who is a genealogist " I had asked him to draw Jean Witherspoon's family tree. It turns out that one of her ancestor, John McNeal, was a butler for the Wollenstone family. Irving managed to go back as far as the end of the seventeenth century, to Susanna Walcott, who was one of the persons who accused others of witchcraft in Salem. But it turns out that this family was never far away from the descendant of Melinda Warren, and were probably themselves quite efficient in the occult, thanks to Lamia's help."

"And they were feeding her, waiting for her to order to go after the witches," Nick said. "You remember how Prue and Piper said they offered the doll to Phoebe for no particular reason? Maybe Jean Witherspoon had cast a spell on it in order to attract them."

"I think so. I think Lamia had time to learn about magic spells and taught them to her warden when she needed to act."

"Thanks, Derek, I'll go tell the girls about it."

She was lying on a hospital bed. She was aware of the presence of Piper, who refused to leave when the doctor asked her to. She heard Nick saying he would call Prue. They were there, she was trying to

get their attention, but they ignored her. Couldn't they see? Couldn't they see how Lamia was stroking her hair? How she was watching Betty eating her meal, as proud as a parent whose child just learned how to use a spoonâ€¦ Awwâ€¦ She could feel the porcelain face brushing against her skin before sharp razors tore her skin into pieces. It was worst every nightâ€¦ The doll was now on her stomach. She felt the small hand pushing on her navel, breaking the skinâ€¦ And slowly, oh so slowly, opening the skin, pushing it asideâ€¦ She felt the porcelain head, the soft hair and the velvet ribbon worming their way into herself, the teeth attacking her organsâ€¦ Oh Piper, why don't you hear me? Why don't you help me? She was alone. Come to me, child, Lamia whispered in her soul. Come to me and there will be no more suffering for you to bear. She could not leave her sisters. That voiceâ€¦ that faceâ€¦ Mum? Yes, child, you will meet your mother againâ€¦ don't you miss her? She's waiting for you, with your grandmother. Oh it would be so soft to let goâ€¦ Mum and Gramsâ€¦ Piperâ€¦ Piper was talking to her nowâ€¦ Prue was there too.. She could not leave themâ€¦ But why didn't they help her? Come with us, child, we will warm you upâ€¦ The doll inside her felt like crushed glassâ€¦ So much painâ€¦ She could hear Piper, follow her voiceâ€¦

"Pheebbs, you must fight it, she can't have you, you're too old to be eaten away by a doll, remember, you promisedâ€¦"

"Piper, look, she's waking up."

Phoebe opened her eyes, unable or unwilling to remember what she had just been through.

When Nick came back to the room, Prue was there and Phoebe had awoken. He told them about Mrs. Witherspoon's family, which left them silent.

"Ms. Halliwell, how are you feeling?" Dr. Fields asked her as examined her.

"Tired, but basically okay," she answered.

"I have to agree on the 'tired' part," the doctor said. "I'd like to keep you here under observation for the night."

"No!" Phoebe exclaimed.

"You have to excuse my sister," Prue said, "she doesn't like hospitals."

"Who does? "

He looked at his patient, who was practically begging him to let her go.

"Well, all right, I'll sign your release form, but you have to promise me," he said to Prue and Piper, "that you will give her the medication I prescribed if this happen again. Let her sleep as much as she wants and bring her back here if her health doesn't improve in a week."

He signed the form and then added:

"I'm serious about it: bring her back, even if she doesn't like hospitals."

Dr. Fields was rewarded by a huge smile from his patient, who promised to be good. The smile would have lit her face, had she not been so exhausted, he thought. But he felt he had taken the right decision in letting her go home with those persons who seemed to love her too much to leave her. The practitioner left and Nick offered them to spend the night at the Legacy House since it was less impregnated with Lamia's energy than their home, and maybe Phoebe would be able to rest. Since the latter really looked awful, they accepted his offer.

Phoebe struggled to stay awake. She had not been so scared since the bogeyman in the basement when she was a kid. She would not sleep, she decided. But she lacked the required energy to achieve that goal. She was afraid to sleep but could not tell them why because she had no idea what it was. She was oh so tired! The three awake persons exchanged worried looks as she fell asleep. They had tried to keep her awake but had failed.

"We must do something!" Piper repeated, pacing up and down the room. "Christina told her to watch and learn! Grr! I hate riddles!"

"Maybe the mistake Sarah Wollenstone did was to not consider the reasons which led Lamia to act that way," Prue ventured.

"Derek said she came from Greek mythology," Nick said. "Why don't you use Greek deities to defeat her? Is that what you had in mind?"

"Exactly," Prue answered with a smile "she loved it when people were efficient, not like at Buckland, where! not the moment to think of work, Prue! "We need to select the good ones, then write a formula down and recite it. Piper, you go home and take this! doll so that we can perform a ritual of some kind."

"Yes, master," she answered, casting Phoebe a glance.

"Don't worry, she'll be alright, I'll watch her," Nick said before kissing her quickly on her cheek, "now go."

For him, this was turning out just fine: a case solved quickly! well, not exactly quickly if you considered it had started in Colonial times, but faster than he had expected. He was often frustrated by all the brain racking his job required and was always happy when he was promised some action. Maybe he should make sure that no sharp object was in the room! after all, he was always the one crashing against a wall and he would take no chance of ending in the hospital. He was almost disappointed when Prue chose to set the exorcism in the park. Oh well, he could always crash against a tree.

"Do cars really have to be so slow?" Piper wondered as she was driving home, talking to an invisible person. "Oh come on people, my

sister's life is at stake! Hurry up! Whoops, sorry Mrs. Calleri, didn't mean to scare you! I guess I'll have to bake cookies to apologize."

She managed to park before the house â€" she knocked over a trash can while doing it, a trash can she knew she should have taken away in the morning, but at least she was home. She ran inside, left the door open, climbed up the stairs, went to Phoebe's room, did not find the doll and cursed under her breath. "Living room!" She ran downstairs, grabbed the doll, left the house, locked the door and ran back to the car. Thank God there was no cops to arrest her for ignoring the speed limits â€" she could always freeze them but would lost too much time in the process, plus she would hate to be labeled as a road runner.

Meanwhile, Nick and Prue had listed the deities they could invoke in the formula, while keeping an eye on Phoebe.

"Don't blame it on yourself, Prue."

"I don'tâ€| but it is my fault! I was the one who went for that stupid doll in the first place!"

Her patience was running thin. Who would have thought there were so many books on Greek mythology and so little information on how to beat a Lamie? Piper arrived then in a rush.

"Oh my God, I felt like I was Bullit â€" you know, the famous car chase in San Francisco, Steve McQueen? Anyway, I got the doll. What did you find so far?"

"We selected a few deities who might help us: Hera, because she was the one who killed Lamia's kids; Hestia, who protected the home and therefore indirectly the children; Artemis, who protected pregnant women and infants; Athena, goddess of war and of wisdom who protected the children; Hermes, who led the souls to Hades; Morpheus, the god of dreams; Iris, messenger of the Olympus; and that's only the basic ones," Prue listed.

"How are you going to write it down? I mean, how do you make a formula?" Nick asked.

"Usually Phoebe takes care of it, but right now, I guess we'll have to do without her help. First, explain the problem, then the solution. And pray for it to work."

"Piper, we can't invoke all the deities we chose. Why don't we go with asking the help of Athena and Hermes?"

"We need Iris to carry the message to them," Piper noticed.

And they began to work on the formula.

She could not even warn them. All of Lamia's victims were standing in the room, their opened mouths fixed in silent screams which their parent had failed to hear. Among the mutilated rotting bodies she

recognized Bobby and Eva and Marie. Those who still had eyeballs were trying to take them off, speaking to her soul, telling her they wanted to rest. Come with us, sister, and then we'll be in peace. Join usâ€¦ The doll approached her, reopened the wounds, biting the witch's cheek away, chewing slowly every bit of it under the watch of Lamia, who was now embracing her aching body. It hurt so badlyâ€¦ She felt as if her body was dressed into an outfit made of barbed wires, an outfit which was getting tighter and tighterâ€¦ She wanted to sleepâ€¦ Then take your eyes off, child, and join usâ€¦

Nick managed to wake her up when he saw she was having a nightmare â€" a nightmare she would not remember. Then her sisters explained the plan to her.

With garlic cloves, they drew their symbol on the ground and put the doll in the middle, then formed a circle around it, Nick standing back, ready to intervene if he was needed. The three witches concentrated and started to recite the formula.

Lamia, hear now the words of the witches!

Hera made you lose your humanity senses.

Iris, messenger of the Gods, carry our pleas:

To Athena, protector of children,

May you help us send their souls to heaven,

To the soul guiding Hermes,

Lead this lost Lamie to Hades.

The wind raised gradually as they were saying the words. Tiny particles of electricity were visible, converging on the doll which was lifted from the ground by an invisible hand as three shadows materialized: they were made of light and according to their figures, Prue recognized the three deities whose help they had asked for. They placed themselves around the doll, pushing gently the witches aside in order to prevent them from being hurt in what was about to happen. The doll convulsed â€" yet her porcelain face was still smiling â€" and her velvet blue dress was torn into pieces as a crouched shadow slowly extracted itself from the cloth body. Its bent head lifted as its arms opened in an embrace. The figure of a woman appeared, her dark light encircled with a red halo, her aura flaming with anger.

The four mortals watched the scene, blinded by the light but unable to take their eyes away from it. The silence was almost deafening â€" the deities made no noise, and the blowing wind was soundless, which only added to the serenity of the mystic scene. They saw Lamia trying to escape the circle of light which Isis, Athena and Hermes formed around her. The ground beneath her feet moved and the earth caved in, without dragging her in. The god held his hand for her to take and she tried to fly away but failed. The warrior goddess shrouded her in her aura, immobilizing the woman-tuned-demon, allowing her half-brother to take Lamia to Hades. Before fading away, the wise goddess turned toward the young persons and without a word, she told them that as the goddess of the righteous battles she would always protect them.

As the deities disappeared, the wind stop and Phoebe fainted " Nick was there to catch her before she hit the ground. When she came back to her senses, he let her sisters take her in, took what was left of the doll inside, for the Legacy to store it, just in case. Can't be too careful.

When they came back, Derek and Alex found Nick and the Halliwell sisters sprawled on various couches and chairs.

"I'm just glad I didn't have to yell "Oh my God they killed Phoebe!"," Piper was saying as they entered the room.

"Hey, how was your conference?" Nick asked.

"Daniel Jackson is a brilliant Egyptologist, and like all geniuses he is laughed at by his peers. But I met Catherine and she told me she would get him a job. She would not tell me what the job is, but the army is involved in it. You all look tired. What did you do?"

They summed up the recent events to the two researchers. As the exorcism was mentioned, Alex immediately turned to Nick, looking for bruises, bandages, or something of that kind, and was surprised to find none. The young man caught her glance, raised his hands in disbelief, shrugged his shoulder and said "I know!"

"You almost look annoyed," Piper noticed.

"Well, a fight is not really a fight without Nick flying through a room," Alex explained.

"Do you need my help on that one?" Prue offered.

"Hey, I don't especially like ending up in the hospital, you know!"

"Your point being?" Piper asked seriously.

The rest of the day was spent with the same light humor " who would have guessed the young man was ticklish? They even managed to make Derek laugh good heartily, much to his colleagues' surprise. The only fly in the ointment was when Charles Witherspoon called to tell them his mother had died of a stroke earlier in the day " just when Lamia had disappeared, they noticed.

"Do you think we should worry about the Witherspoon family in the future?" Phoebe asked.

"Oh come on, Lamia's dead, she can't manipulate them anymore. Legacy-Halliwell team, 1, Lamia, 0, we win!" Piper answered.

A few months later, the Legacy members and the Halliwell sisters received a birth announcement: Alice Witherspoon was born, a healthy baby, much to her parent's joy. At the hospital, Amy and Charles chatted with the couple next door, who just had twins, Jesse and

Cassidy. When they died a couple of weeks later, the doctors attributed it to cardiac insufficiency. Who would have guessed the lovely stuffed animals the Witherspoons had given them were responsible for it? But after all, Orpheus was not the only one who had managed to come back from Hades' world. She had been patient before, she could wait again. What were centuries to the immortal soul of a demon? Moreover, she was only one of the Lamie. There were still plenty of them waiting for children to be put on the infant natural death list.

The End

End
file.